

# U.S. 401 CORRIDOR STUDY

Wake County / Fuquay-Varina  
Harnett County / Lillington



## Appendix E: North Carolina House Representative Erin P. Pare Letter



### North Carolina General Assembly House Of Representatives

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RULES, CALENDAR, AND OPERATIONS OF THE  
HOUSE

March 15, 2024

NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)  
1 Fenton Main Street  
Suite 201  
Cary, NC 27511

Dear CAMPO Executive Board Members:

On Wednesday, March 20, 2024 the CAMPO Executive Board will meet and consider endorsing the US 401 Corridor Study recommendations. The Wake County portion of the recommended US 401 corridor is located within both Wake County Board of Commissioners District 2 and NC House District 37.

As Kenneth Withrow accurately explains in his staff report, “there has been significant technical analysis and public feedback analysis conducted for the study over the past two years.” It is also accurate that the recommended US 401 corridor avoids impacting personal property for some, and is completely impactful for others. Simply put, there are winners and losers here. For the losers, it is of the utmost importance that the system of representation through which these decisions are made is as fair and **accountable** as possible.

The US 401 Bypass corridor situation is a compelling case study for why the passage of HB 99 “Wake County Board of Commissioners Elections” was both very important and very timely. HB 99 provided the needed piece of accountability missing in this decision-making process.

On June 6, 2023, the General Assembly enacted into law HB 99 which reformed the elections of Wake County Commissioners by requiring that Wake County Commissioners be elected from electoral districts, where only the residents of each of the seven districts would be eligible to cast a vote for a commissioner to represent, and be accountable to, only that district. The bill passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate and received the 100% endorsement of the Wake County Board of Commissioners. The bill also added two at-large seats, to ensure an at-large perspective in addition to district-specific representation.



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Since the Wake Board of Commissioners is elected on staggered years, the election of the District 2 commissioner (southern Wake County) under the new electoral district format will not take place until November 3, 2026.

The recommended US 401 corridor for your consideration this week impacts property owners located in unincorporated southern Wake County. These property owners are not eligible to vote for any Mayor or municipal representative serving on the CAMPO Executive Board and that will cast a vote on this issue. There is, however, one voting board member from each member county board of commissioners. But because the Wake County Commissioners serving now were elected at-large (county-wide) instead of district-specific, it is understandable that impacted unincorporated Wake County residents see a lack of direct accountability to them on the current CAMPO Executive Board.

We know that elected officials are accountable to those who elect them to office, as they can also be voted out of office by those to whom they are accountable. With a county the size of Wake with 1.2 million people and seven commissioner districts all elected at-large, where 55% of the electorate resides in Raleigh and Cary, the people of District 2 will not have a commissioner accountable to only District 2 until the election of 2026. This will be the first time District 2 will be on the ballot as an electoral district rather than an at-large elected residency district, per the passage of HB 99.

Again, for the "losers" here, it is of the utmost importance that they have confidence that the system upon which these decisions are made is as fair and accountable as possible. ***Therefore, the CAMPO Executive Board should not hold a vote to endorse the Wake County portion of the corridor study recommendation until after the District 2 Wake Board of Commissioner elections in 2026 take place, and the winner of that election, regardless of person or party, is seated as the accountable voice to the people of District 2 on this issue.***

It is important to note that the CAMPO Executive Summary indicates that "the project is still in the planning phase and is not planned for construction until at least 2050," and that "Alternative XZ should become the Future U.S. 401 alignment included in the 2055 MTP." ***Therefore, the small delay of this vote by the CAMPO Executive Board will provide the utmost in accountability in the process for those impacted, while also providing for the 2055 MTP timeline.***

Thank you for your serious consideration of this important matter impacting the people of southern Wake, and for your leadership in ensuring accountable government.

Sincerely,

Representative Erin Paré  
North Carolina House Of Representatives, District 37

Cc: Chris Lukasina, Executive Director